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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 002803

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, EUR/ACE, INR
EUR/CACEN FOR EUGENIA SIDEREAS
NSC FOR MATTHEW BRYZA
ANKARA FOR COB BLAHA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: GOAM OFFERS CONDOLENCES TO TURKEY AFTER ISTANBUL
TERRORIST ATTACKS

11. (U) Classified by Ambassador John Ordway for reasons 1.5
(b) and (d).

12. (C) Summary: The GOAM responded to the November 20 terrorist attacks in Istanbul with a public statement of condemnation, followed by a telephone call by Armenian FM Oskanian to Turkish FM Gul on November 22. The attacks, which attracted wide coverage in the local media and among everyday Armenians, were of particular interest to the GOAM given the large Armenian community in Istanbul and the initial press reports of damage to the Armenian Marmara Cultural Institute near the HSBC building. The lead-up to the GOAM response (which only took place late November 21 after FM Oskanian returned to Armenia from his travel to Kyrgyzstan) confirmed the active role Oskanian plays in the evolving Armenia-Turkey relationship. End summary.

PUBLIC STATEMENT OFFERS CONDOLENCES

13. (C) The GOAM released a public statement the evening of November 21 condemning the recent terrorist attacks on the British Consulate and HSBC bank building in Istanbul.

Note: The statement was the first time the GOAM had reached out to Turkey in such a public fashion since the August 1999 earthquake in Turkey. End note. The attacks, which attracted wide coverage in the local media and among everyday Armenians, were of particular interest to the GOAM given the large Armenian community in Istanbul and the initial press reports of damage to the Armenian Marmara Cultural Institute near the HSBC building. The November 22 press release follows:

Begin text: The Republic of Armenia strongly condemns the terrorist acts which took place in Turkey, and which resulted in great human loss and destruction. We express our sincere sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims, and to the governments and peoples of Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Republic of Armenia unequivocally joins the international battle against terrorism which knows no borders and does not discriminate among nations and religions. Terror acts in Turkey pose a threat to all humanity. End text.

OSKANIYAN-GUL CALL FORMAL "BUT FRIENDLY"

14. (C) In addition to the public statement, FM Oskanian made the rare move of calling Turkish FM Gul November 22 to express the GOAM's condolences. The MFA told us that the call lasted ten minutes, had a "protocolary but friendly" tone, but did not include any offer for humanitarian support. The call was the first time the two FM's had spoken since their meeting on the margins of UNGA in September. The MFA Turkish Desk confirmed that Oskanian wanted to send the GOT a message that the GOAM "understands domestic tragedies and expects the Government of Turkey to do its part to fight terrorists." Oskanian reportedly told MFA colleagues following the telephone call that the attacks must not unduly postpone the GOAM's ongoing dialogue with the GOT regarding opening the Armenia-Turkey border.

15. (C) Comment: The process leading up to the GOAM response confirmed the active role Oskanian plays in the Armenia-Turkey relationship. High and mid-level officials inside the MFA and the President's Office were unwilling to move on this issue until Oskanian returned from his trip to Kyrgyzstan. Oskanian's role is so central in this issue that the GOAM preferred to let the condolence message go out two days after the fact rather than change regular interlocutors and risk interrupting the evolving relationship between the two countries.

ORDWAY